

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2022

- Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Simeon Anyalemechi, Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Jennifer Bayjoo, Dr Tony Coombs, Councillor Phil Cusack, Ben Gallop, Professor Helen Marshall, Sean O'Hara, Micheal Omoniyi [until COU.22.85, via Microsoft Teams], Sam Plant [from COU.22.84, via Microsoft Teams], Festus Robert, Alan Roff, Helen Taylor, Professor Mike Wood, and Dr Elsa Zekeng [via Microsoft Teams].
- Apologies: Angela Adimora, Garry Dowdle, Philip Green, Merlyn Lowther, Councillor John Merry and Ian Moston.
- In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise), John McCarthy (Associate Chief Operating Officer), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), Dean Pateman (University Secretary and Director of Academic Quality, interim), Jo Purves (Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Development) Huw Williams (Chief Operating Officer) and Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary).
- By invitation: Ed Moloney (Chief Executive Officer) University of Salford Students' Union [COU.22.75; COU.22.76], Dr Janice Allan (Dean, Salford Business School) [COU.22.80], and Andrew Hartley (Director of Legal and Compliance) [COU.22.82].

COU.22.70 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Noted:

- i) that Cllr Merry (*in absentia*) and Cllr Cusack declared interests in Item 13: Private Sector Partner Review / Farmer Norton Site Business Plan due to their membership of Salford City Council;
- ii) that Cllr Cusack would leave the Chamber for the duration of the item.

COU.22.71 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 July 2022 (COU/22/59).

(Secretary's note: it was confirmed separately that Jo Purves, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Development, be recorded as in attendance).

COU.22.72 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Reported:

- i) that the standing management report on equality, diversity and inclusivity had been accidentally omitted from the agenda and that this would be circulated under separate cover for confirmation at the next meeting;
- ii) that a number of actions outstanding over the past two years in the areas of Council and committee membership, governance and Council effectiveness had been consolidated into a single action, and that the next meeting of Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC) was to consider a report from the Chair of Council addressing the single action;
- iii) that following GNEC consideration, a further report would be made to Council to ensure a coherent approach to the outstanding issues;
- iv) that regarding the action on equality considerations in University procurement processes [minute reference COU.22.58], that the majority of purchasing was via framework

consortiums and that members were assured that equality was tested in the framework award;

- v) that in particular this included testing against the following questions [extracted from the tender process]

Please detail how your organisation will promote Equality and Diversity through the life of this Framework Agreement. Your response should include:

- *Raising awareness and communication of Equality and Diversity within your organisation and Member Institutions;*
- *Promoting law in students from different backgrounds;*
- *Embedding Equality and Diversity in recruitment, selection, training, promotion and policies and procedures;*
- *What recourse individuals have if they feel discriminated against;*
- *Sanctions in place for those found guilty of discrimination;*
- *Managing Equality and Diversity within your supply chain including contractual conditions with your suppliers (i.e., Supply Chain Code of Conduct).*
- *Addressing unconscious bias in selection processes for workers or candidates?*

- vi) that contract management and review was conducted on a quarterly basis, and breaches addressed via that process;
- vii) that regarding the action on finding a dedicated space for postgraduate research (PGR) students [[minute reference COU.22.55](#)], that two spaces had been identified to conduct viva voce (viva) assessments from next month and a dedicated space had been confirmed available from January 2023;
- viii) that regarding the report made on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) results under the Vice-Chancellor's report [[minute reference COU.22.56](#)], that the University had received an increased allocation of quality related (QR) research funding than had been anticipated.

Noted: the view that it had been good to see dedicated PGR space in the new Science, Engineering and Environment building on the earlier tour of the newly opened facility.

COU.22.73 **CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS**

Confirmed: that Item 19 (Use of University Seal; COU/22/73) was noted without discussion.

(Secretary's note: it was confirmed separately that the Executive Director of Finance had also countersigned the installation of the radio antennae and installation of the fibre optic cables documents, in accordance with the Financial Regulations).

COU.22.74 **MEMBERSHIP**

Reported: that there had been a number of applicants for the academic staff member role, and that consequently the Chair had approved deferral of the item until the next meeting to enable the recruitment exercise to be fully completed.

COU.22.75 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Received: a report on research commissioned by the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) to inform the 2022/23 schedule of student experience items, alongside an update on development of the University's student profiles (COU/22/61).

Noted:

- i) that other Students' Unions had undertaken similar research, and that it was the intention to develop longitudinal data to monitor how the segmented profiles might change;
- ii) that the USSU wanted to be data-informed in planning its strategies;
- iii) that the University had a mental health and wellbeing strategy for its students, but that this had been developed prior to the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic and was due to be reviewed;

- iv) that the USSU would work in partnership with the University on supporting mental health and wellbeing, and particularly through the anti-loneliness initiative being led by the President;
- v) the view after hearing from the student voice on social and personal barriers to learning, that the anti-loneliness strategy was critical;
- vi) that it had been intended that the research would provide data to focus USSU's attention on the real issues for students at the University, and not on student stereotypes widely circulated in the media;
- vii) the view that it was important to share the data more widely with the local community and local authorities;
- viii) that the Union had been working more closely with Salford City Council during the Covid-19 pandemic and hoped to develop the relationship around the civic agenda in the future;
- ix) that the Union was a referring body to local food banks;
- x) that approximately six per cent of the student population had participated in the research survey, and those respondents had been split between undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- xi) that it was the intention to commission Alterline (the organisation that had undertaken the original survey) to continue to undertake regular pulse surveys to build on the original sample size;
- xii) that the research had helped the Union to identify the key barriers to learning on behalf of its student members, and that the focus would now be on addressing solutions through the work of the Sabbatical Officers and Union colleagues;
- xiii) that a National Union of Students (NUS) survey had identified that 25% of students claimed 'not to have a friend on campus';
- xiv) the view that it was challenging to gain student feedback and perspectives, and that the research had found a valuable route into this information;
- xv) that the Sabbatical Officers attached to Schools would help to deliver local solutions;
- xvi) the view that segmentation was a good method to approach the student experience, but that in summarising a 26k student population into four key segments would need further monitoring and oversight, for example via a mapping exercise;
- xvii) that the University had also produced a series of research-informed student attribute profiles, and that there was an opportunity to bring together both pieces of work to complement and shape service design and student engagement;
- xviii) the view that it would be useful to gain further understanding on the join-up between the profiles and personas included in the Report, and also to compare data and share learning with similar institutions;
- xix) the view that allocation of a profile at registration might be inflexible and not sensitive to the student journey during their time at the University;
- xx) the view that there was a risk that mental health became a 'catch-all' for a number of issues, and that the Union might consider a social inclusion approach as an alternative;
- xxi) that in public health strategies persons had a right to move from coping to struggling, to mental health diagnosis;
- xxii) that the Union did not take mental health issues lightly, and that the view was understood;
- xxiii) that however, mental health was a real factor in some instances of barriers to a learning;
- xxiv) the view that student and staff support, and wellbeing was not mutually exclusive;
- xxv) that the Chair thanked the Union for the informative Report, which would frame future deliberations.

COU.22.76

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD STUDENTS' UNION REPORT

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, a report on the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) priorities for 2022/23 and an update on key operations (COU/22/62).

Reported:

- i) that the Report format had been adjusted to include a focus on the Sabbatical Officer and Team priorities;
- ii) that regarding financial sustainability, the USSU pension scheme remained in a surplus position.

Noted:

- i) the view that it was positive for the USSU to prioritise real-world challenges on behalf of the student body;
- ii) that the Student Loan Company (SLC) had already reported a higher-than-average number of withdrawals at the start of the current academic year, and that there was some evidence that this was due to students' ability to afford a university place;
- iii) that the ability to meet basic needs and to achieve a sense of belonging were of real concern this year;
- iv) that the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET) had considered a range of additional support options for both students and staff regarding the rising economic cost-of-living pressure;
- v) that for the winter period (December 2022 to February 2023) students' would be provided with £30 per month to assist with transport or food costs; access to a winter clothing offer; where applicable a placement travel bursary up to the value of £150 across the period; access to a new energy support fund; additional funding for the existing Hardship Fund (and relaxed eligibility requirements); two free meals per week via campus catering outlets (Salford) and £50 each to be made available via a software application (app) to purchase food or catering in those outlets;
- vi) that in the case of the free meal offer, that this would also be available to staff;
- vii) that any monies saved from staff choosing to forgo the additional financial payment would be re-allocated to the Student Hardship fund;
- viii) that financial wellbeing and support would be kept under review throughout the winter;
- ix) that a communication regarding the additional support was being prepared and would be issued very shortly;
- x) that in recent meetings between Sabbatical Officers and students it had been identified that the opportunity to join societies helped to combat loneliness, but that affordability was a barrier to joining;
- xi) that the Inspire scheme (through which the additional monthly amount would be made available) was not limited by student cohort, and was open to home and international students either at undergraduate or postgraduate level;
- xii) that, similarly, additional support for travel to placements was not limited by programme;
- xiii) the view that the University's sound financial position had enabled it to provide additional support;
- xiv) the view that students who were not engaged or were suffering from loneliness could potentially be missed if the hardship and energy funds worked on a 'first come, first served' basis;
- xv) that the hardship fund had been increased by £400k to ensure greater reach;
- xvi) that the USSU was also engaged in lobbying the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, to extend free bus travel to students living in the region;
- xvii) that student services' capacity was being monitored weekly, and in particular against the three-day response time service level agreement;
- xviii) that the University also had the benefit of being able to draw on the Greater Manchester University Mental Health Service.

RESOLVED: that the approach taken by the University and the USSU towards student and staff financial wellbeing and support be endorsed.

COU.22.77

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/22/63).

Reported:

- i) that the University had met or exceeded the quality thresholds set by the Office for Students' (OfS) under its ongoing condition of regulation (B3) except for one programme;
- ii) that the programme had already been closed to new entrants, and was in the process of being 'run out' with additional support for those students still registered;
- iii) that government policy was changing rapidly due to the recent changes in leadership;

- iv) that however, the University remained focused on its corporate strategy and its work toward successful outcomes for its students.

COU.22.78 **2021/2022 POLICY REVIEW**

Received: a report on the key policy developments across the Office for Students, Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy during the 2021/2022 financial year (COU/22/64).

Noted: the view that the potential de-funding of BTEC courses and mixed messages on how this might manifest had made it very difficult for students to plan effectively.

COU.22.79 **OFFICE FOR STUDENTS' ONGOING CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

Received: a report on revisions to the ongoing conditions of registration 'Condition B3' and 'Condition B6' issued by the Office for Students' under the Higher Education Regulatory Framework for England, effective from 3 October 2022 and 6 October 2022 respectively (COU/22/65).

Reported:

- i) that the Office for Students' (OfS) had published the detail and data thresholds for its ongoing conditions of regulation 'B3' and 'B6';
- ii) that B3 thresholds were minimum requirements, but that B6 thresholds were a measurement of quality contributing to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award;
- iii) that however, participation in the TEF was mandatory as part of the B6 condition;
- iv) that following the hard work of colleagues led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Student Experience, the University had exceeded all B3 thresholds except one;
- v) that as the Vice-Chancellor had explained earlier, the issue related to one programme which had been discontinued;
- vi) that however, the good performance was anchored in large-scale high performing programmes in the Schools of Health and Society, and Arts Media and Creative Technologies;
- vii) that the published data was complex, and it had been challenging to identify individual populations;
- viii) that the data would be reviewed again in four years, but that it was likely the minimum thresholds would be increased;
- ix) that Audit and Risk Committee would continue to track institutional risk arising from registration with the OfS;
- x) that the outcomes were a result of two years' work;
- xi) that the University was tracking its own performance and that action to address below-threshold performance would be taken internally;
- xii) the view that members should review performance against the thresholds during Semester One;
- xiii) that newly appointed staff were required to hold or gain a postgraduate certificate in academic practice, and the view that engagement with this should be followed up;
- xiv) that a course which had been discontinued would be 'run out', but that data would continue to accrue until registered students had graduated;
- xv) the view that academic colleagues put a large amount of effort and support in place for remaining students when programmes were discontinued for new entrants;
- xvi) that despite data remaining in the system, the University had taken action to address the issue and was ahead in all other B3 thresholds;
- xvii) that however, the margin of success was varied between thresholds;
- xviii) that regarding graduate employment outcomes and growing the placement opportunity, that the University was seeking to appoint a senior role to develop and manage this;
- xix) the view that gainful employment was the main objective for most students, and that placement opportunities should be extended to postgraduate students too.

RESOLVED: that the Report be noted, and that support for placements on postgraduate programmes be reported on at a future meeting.

ACTION: PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT EXPERIENCE

COU.22.80

ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS

Received: a presentation on the University's action plan for enabling student success (COU/22/66).

Reported:

- i) that following the clarity provided by the OfS regarding the minimum threshold requirements for the B3 condition, the enabling student success (ESS) priorities had continued in four key areas: academic success; customer service; leadership; and environment;
- ii) that despite a good result regarding the thresholds, there was no room for complacency;
- iii) that the next stage in ESS was to transition towards implementation of the Employment and Education Strategy;
- iv) that the Strategy would build on the successful ESS outcome and switch effort from a tactical plan to a strategic implementation;
- v) that the Strategy had been approved by the Senate, and that the individual change project business cases would be presented to the Senate in the new year;
- vi) that the change projects would run between 2023 and 2027;
- vii) that the Strategy was aligned to the refreshed framework of the digital IT strategy, and that the ultimate ambition was to achieve a 'top 50' ranking for the University;
- viii) that there was a good support structure in place, for example through the new programme monitoring and enhancement procedure (PMEP);
- ix) that the next point to evaluate ESS would be student engagement with first assessment submission.

COU.22.81

FARMER NORTON SITE BUSINESS PLAN CLOSED MINUTE

Received: on the recommendation of Finance and Resources Committee, a report on the Farmer Norton site business plan proposed by the Private Sector Partner, English Cities Fund (COU/22/67).

(Secretary's note: Cllr Cusack left the Chamber for the duration of the discussion).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted:

- i) that the Report had been discussed in detail at the recent meeting of Finance and Resources Committee (FRC);

ii) - redacted -

COU.22.82 MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY CHARACTERISTICS AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Considered: on the recommendation of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee, assurances as to the methodology for capture and public disclosure of membership diversity characteristics (COU/22/68).

Reported:

- i) that following agreement on the principle of collecting and publishing collective diversity data of members, this proposal aimed to provide assurance on a protected method of collection;
- ii) that GNEC had discussed the method at its recent meeting and was satisfied with the proposal;
- iii) that data would be anonymised and provided by on a consensual (voluntary) basis;
- iv) that data would be treated and published in compliance with data protection laws.

RESOLVED: that the proposal be approved.

COU.22.83 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT CLOSED MINUTE

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, a detailed report on the National Student Survey results 2022 and Graduate Outcomes (2019/20 leavers). Also included was the University's performance against lead indicators during Quarter 4 2021/2022, and the Top 10 Risk Profile was appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/22/69).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

COU.22.84 SENATE

Received: a Chair's report of the meeting of Senate held on 21 September 2022 (COU/22/70).

Reported:

- i) that the Senate had received a detailed report on degree apprenticeship programmes, and had noted that Ofsted could call an inspection from this point forward;
- ii) that VCET also had oversight of operational preparedness for an Ofsted inspection via monthly reports;
- iii) that the Senate had discussed the OfS Condition B3 minimum thresholds, and the triangulation of the relationship between the regulatory body, the Council and itself.

COU.22.85

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT CLOSED MINUTE

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter 4 2021/22 finance report (COU/22/71).

Reported:

- i) that the Report showed the unaudited year-end financial position;
- ii) that the external audit was nearing completion;
- iii) - redacted -

Noted:

- i) that FRC had discussed the Report at considerable length at its recent meeting;
- ii) that the Committee was assured of the financial sustainability of the University, and had noted the achievement during challenging economic times;
- iii) - redacted -

COU.22.86

COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Received: the Committee Chairs' Reports (COU/22/72).

Reported:

- i) that interviews for the academic staff member of Council had been undertaken by a sub-group of GNEC and a recommendation was to be put forward;
- ii) that the volume and quality of applications had been excellent, with all those interviewed demonstrating passion, knowledge, and a desire to shape the University;
- iii) that the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) had discussed the internal audit report on culture at the University;
- iv) that ARC had recommended the report on culture be shared with GNEC;
- v) that ARC noted an emerging risk on the establishment of the Greater Manchester Institute of Technology (GMioT) regarding a security charge over the building;
- vi) that FRC had considered and endorsed the proposed phasing and business schedule for the Campus Masterplan;

- vii) that FRC had undertaken a deep dive into delivery of the People Plan, and had requested further data in the next report;
- viii) that FRC had congratulated the Student Recruitment teams on recovery of the student recruitment position, and in particular had noted the 40% growth in admissions through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) over the past decade.

Noted: that regarding the GMIoT risk, a possible solution had been identified since the report had been made to ARC.

COU.22.87

ANY OTHER BUSINESS CLOSED MINUTE

Noted:

- i) that members thanked Peter Gregory (*in absentia*) and Dean Pateman who were both concluding their interim contracts with the University at the end of October 2022;
- ii) that the permanent HR Director was due to arrive in January 2023;
- iii) that recruitment of a permanent Executive Director for Governance and Assurance (incorporating the role of University Secretary) was underway;
- iv) that in strictest confidence, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Helen Marshall, had tendered her resignation and would be retiring from the University at the end of the academic year;
- v) that a public announcement was being prepared for issue on Monday 24 October 2022, once all members had been informed of the situation;
- vi) that a recruitment process would commence shortly thereafter;
- vii) that Professor Marshall thanked members for their support during the time she had held the position of Vice-Chancellor, and that she looked forward to continuing to work for the University this academic year.

COU.22.88

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported: that the next meeting was scheduled for Friday 2 December 2022.